

Faces of The Commons - Latin America

Executive Summary

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Subject matter

This report provides an insight analysis of the network of Creative Commons inside three countries of Latin America: Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay.

Methods of Analysis

The method for this research is mainly qualitative. For conducting this research, we interviewed a total of 10 women and 7 men belonging directly to the teams. In the case of Uruguay and Paraguay we did group interviews.

Results

One of the most striking features the affiliate's network of Latin America is the vast diversity of profiles that nourish the CC Community. In fact, as several of the interviewees pointed out, each one of them is far from being the "typical regional affiliate", usually portrayed as "one or two lawyers".

In a rather hostile - or, at best, indifferent - environment, chapters have a mode of "permanent activity" that seems to be the default mindset for the region. For that matter, each of the affiliates' interests skew on rather different directions. Roughly, two distinctive fields of action can be distinguished: (1) active participation in the field: in communities of creators / producers or in relation to the GLAM sector; and (2) advocacy and lobbying among public and political institutions. The other side of this advocacy movement is to "bring to life" the CC licenses and the spirit of a free culture.

Even though the CC license suits their interests adequately, Creative Commons Community still plays a subsidiary role in their missions as chapters. As a matter of fact, there is a general sense of disconnection between their work on "policy and projects" in the field and the vision, values, goals and directives of CC.

They choose CC because it allows them to achieve their goals faster and easier, but there is not a sense of CC community or partnership in what they are doing, both within HQ and with the network. The network appears to be a vague concept. Chapters point out specific people as "the network" but underestimate the fact that CC is what brings them together. Overall, they talk about a feeling of being isolated. This feeling applies both to advocacy efforts and to specific projects they're carrying on. The common feeling is that HQ could do more both in terms to understand their affiliates and to help them.

The affiliates recognize very positive aspects of their participation in the community. Nonetheless, they also pose interesting questions to express their mild discontent with certain practices of the network. As a matter of fact, as aforementioned, these objections tend to be aggravated when the affiliates feel that they are disconnected from the global community.

Conclusions

We believe that the most important issue to address is this feeling of disconnection with the CC Community. Indeed, this weak sense of belonging cascades to most aspects of the affiliates' relationship with the Creative Commons as a whole, generating a negative impact that ultimately hinders the potential that the community might have in the field. Furthermore, there are no clear notions that help the chapters to understand what they are expected to do and the type of support that HQ can provide them with. Hence, it may also be observed that the present model of affiliation does not fulfill the expectations of most volunteers.

There are opportunities that are not being properly addressed for different reasons.

Recommendations

We have organized our recommendations in three axis: (1) Communication in the network; (2) Funding; and (3) Affiliation.

Communication in the network

- CC needs to establish a common agenda with their affiliate teams, with a clear mechanism of follow-up and feedback.
- CC needs to overcome the linguistic barrier between HQ, the network and the chapters.
- CC needs to facilitate integration at the global and regional level.

Funding

- **To diversify lines of funding.** CC could open up different lines that vary according the situation.
- **If funding cannot be provided, capacity building is needed.** CC as a global network counts with several organizations that could help smaller ones to grow through collaborative funding.

Affiliation

- Opening up the network for other types of commitment that don't necessarily involve a formal affiliate institution could work in the region.
- **Allow different levels of commitment** to the network from different persons, group of interest or organizations.
- **Clarify the role of HQ, chapters and other potential members of the network.** Whatever the model is, as for today, chapters - even the ones that have been working for a long time - do not have a clear answer for what they are expected to do.
- **Enhance capacity building for advocacy.** Policy, advocacy or copyright reform is one of the key strategic areas that should boost CC in the future, given the serious threats that seem imminent in the short run.